1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

606 of the house by a partition of bark cloth or imported calico. After he has left she comes out and follows her usual occupations. Upon his return he must give warning by striking the boat with the paddle or pole before proceeding to the hut, and she retires immediately to her own apartment. When she returns from the plantation or from fishing she must likewise give notice, and he walks away for a few minutes, until she has reached her quarters. Should the two meet unexpectedly she will quickly throw a cloth over her head, and he will pass on, turning his face away from her. Should, however, he purposely look at her, or fail to give the prescribed warning upon his return, she will consider this an insult for which she will demand payment through a third person.

This custom appears to exist among all the Sumu subtribes; it is also found among the Miskito of the upper Rio Coco, who are largely mixed with the Sumu, but it has not been observed in other parts of the Mosquito Coast. The origin of this custom is somewhat obscure, and I was unable to obtain from the Indians any satisfactory explanation regarding it. The usual answer is that they observe it because it has been handed down to them by their ancestors. According to Grossmann (b: 4), each mother stands under the special protection of the tapir, who is angry at the man who has robbed her of her daughter, and only refrains from punishing him on condition that he never looks on her. Therefore the man who has looked on his mother-in-law is fated to meet his death from the enraged tapir, unless absolved by making a payment to the wronged woman.

In former days the same taboo existed among the Miskito between a man and his sister-in-law, the wife of his birth friend (*lapya*) and the wife of his covenant friend (*libra*); or between a woman and her brother-in-law, and the husbands of both her *lapya* and *libra*.

841 MENSTRUAL SECLUSION.—During the menstrual periods (M.: *mairin siknis* "woman sickness," *kuti siknis* "monthly sickness"; S.: *tiñ dutni, tiñ dutka* "bad hand") the woman is considered unclean and she is shunned by her husband. She must not touch any food intended for other people, otherwise the latter may die. Formerly the young girl had to undergo certain puberty ordeals at the first menstrual period, but I was unable to obtain any details relating thereto.

When the Miskito woman is inconvenienced in the accustomed manner, she occupies a small temporary hut (M.: *tala watla* "blood house") built by her husband at a few hundred yards from the settlement. She remains there a couple of days. At night one of the other women joins her to keep her company, but to all the men, her husband included, the hut is taboo. While in this state of impurity the woman must not be seen by a sukya, for that would weaken the latter's connection with the spirits, and perhaps even cause his

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

death. At the conclusion of the third day the woman bathes herself in a neighboring creek and then rejoins her family. All cooking or drinking vessels used by her during this period are broken and thrown away. 841

Among the Sumu similar beliefs are held with regard to menstruation. The woman, however, never leaves her home, but she remains secluded in a corner of the house, a cloth partition separating her quarters from the rest of the hut. The Miskito habit of retiring to a provisional ranch or "going to the bush" (M.: *untara dimaya;* T., P.: *asnipas kana;* U.: *asnipas awas*) has never been practiced by the Sumu, and it would appear as if it was in former days also unknown among the Miskito. In fact the Sumu state that the menstruous woman must keep away from the bush, where she might be attacked by jaguars, pumas, or snakes, or where she might be seduced by a spirit in anthropomorphic or zoömorphic form. When the three days are over the woman takes a steam bath at home. The latter is prepared by heating a few large white stones and then pouring water upon them, while the woman will bend over them with a thick blanket thrown over the naked body. After this she is no longer considered unclean.

Celibacy.—Celibacy is considered as something abnormal and uncanny among the Indians; people leading presumably an irreproachable celibate life are supposed to practice sexual intercourse with spirits. 589

Prostitution.—Prostitution is now met with among the Miskito inhabiting such settlements as have a large percentage of foreigners or Ladinos, but this has never been a recognised institution as among the more civilized tribes of Mexico and Central America. 548

Polygamy.—Polygamy exists, but it is not very common, and is generally limited to men of rank, as sorcerers. I have known Indians with 4 and even 5 or 6 wives, who all lived under the same roof. Each one of the women had her own hearth and cooking utensils and she prepared the food for herself and her children. The husband ate wherever he preferred. When he wished to buy something for his favorite wife he must treat the others alike in order to avoid scenes of jealousy which, it must be said, are very rare. The women have rarely a dispute with each other; sometimes they are all sisters, the eldest one, however, being generally the mistress of the house. They call each other *lakma* (M.) or *kahkā* (S.). Sometimes an Indian with wife and children may adopt a young orphan girl with the intention of making her his wife when she arrives at puberty. 595

According to Henderson (223) the Miskito King George, who governed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had as many as 22 wives. M. W. (206) and Sloane (a: I, p. lxxvii) mention the existence of polygamy for this tribe; elsewhere, however, the

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

Among some tribes, this ceremony is repeated at a later date. The *Sumo* are said to have practiced circumcision. The couvade is general.

Individual names are derived from some peculiarity or mannerism. Such names were not used to address a person, especially older people.

Puberty.—Puberty ceremonies consist of tests, the details of which vary from tribe to tribe. *Sumo* boys receive serious military training at puberty.

Menstruating women are considered to be impure and are confined to a corner of the house (*Sumo*) or to a special hut (*Mosquito* and *Paya*). They are cleansed by bathing or, among the *Sumo*, by a steam bath.

Death.—Death is thought to be due to sorcery or to the machinations of evil spirits. People about to die are abandoned in the bush, or they may even be killed. If a person dies in a village it has to be abandoned.

The dead are usually buried in the dwelling, which is abandoned (*Paya*), or, among some tribes, in a special hut. The corpse is placed in a coffin made of a canoe wrapped in bark cloth. Personal belongings, food, and a dog are placed in the grave. Among the *Mosquito*, corpses were sometimes sewed in a mat and placed upright in a grave, facing the east. Slaves, servants, and sometimes a shaman were killed and buried with *Mosquito* chiefs. Early reports of the mummification of chiefs appear to be exceptional and may refer to other tribes. Clay and gold masks of chiefs are reported from one locality, probably *Sumo*.

The dead were mourned in many ways. The relatives cut their hair short, wept, and fasted. A mourning ritual included attempts at suicide, which friends prevented. The women sang songs in praise of the dead. Anniversary ceremonies, held at varying intervals, were intended to appease evil spirits and to aid the soul on its long journey to the hereafter. Shamans invoke the soul in order to discover who was responsible for the death and to ascertain future needs. About a year after death the *Mosquito* hold an elaborate anniversary ceremony, in which face masks and other paraphernalia are employed. The *Sumo* have similar ceremonies which differ in detail. Formerly, a *Mosquito* woman exhumed the bones of her husband and carried them in a bag for a year, subsequently hanging them in the house. She might not remarry for 2 years.

According to Von Hagen (1943), *Jicaque* death and burial customs are a curious mixture of Christianity and their own beliefs. After some preliminary mourning the body, clothed in the garments in which the person died, is wrapped in cloth or bark cloth and buried in the cemetery. A small wooden cross is put at the foot of the grave, and a pot through which a hole is punched is laid at the head. The cemetery is an enclosure on a hilltop, which is walled off, as are Spanish cemeteries.

WARFARE

Most of the information concerning warfare pertains to the *Mosquito*, who were highly organized for this purpose. Undoubtedly much of this